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DETAILS INSIDE

THE HANDS OF SHANG-CHI.

MASTER OF KUNG FU

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COMICS
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AUTHORITY



DEATH

IS A DARK ANGEL!

GENE DAY

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my **father** did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. I learned many things from my father: that my name means 'The Rising and Advancing of a Spirit,' and that my body could be forged into a living weapon through the discipline of kung fu. Since then, I have learned that my father is **Dr. Fu Manchu**, the most insidiously evil man on Earth... and that to **honor** him would bring nothing but **dishonor** to the spirit of my **name**."

Stan Lee PRESENTS: MASTER OF KUNG FU!

Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

THE DARK ANGEL'S KISS

"THE DEATH OF LOVE IS MUCH LIKE THE DEATH OF LIFE ITSELF. FOR WITHOUT LOVE, LIFE BECOMES A PALE SHADOW OF BEING."

DOUG MOENCH • WRITER

"SINCE THE ADVENT OF THE SOVIET KGB DEFECTOR-- SHE WHO IS KNOWN AS THE DARK ANGEL OF DEATH-- THE LOVE BETWEEN CLIVE RESTON AND MELISSA GREVILLE HAS BEEN TORN."

"IT TEARS ME, TOO, TO SEE IT."

JACK ABEL • INKER

JIM NOVAK • LETTERS

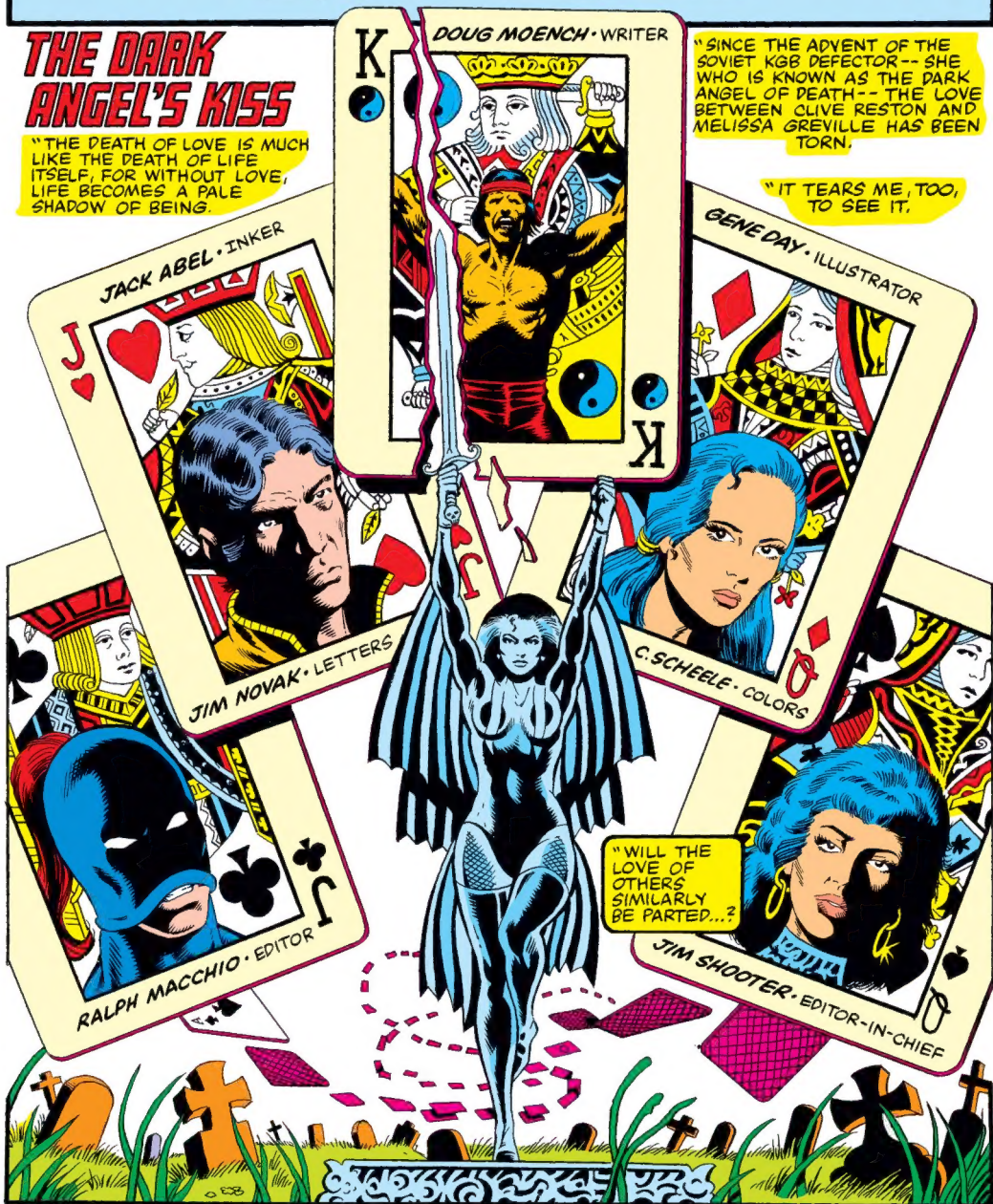
GENE DAY • ILLUSTRATOR

C. SCHEELE • COLORS

RALPH MACCHIO • EDITOR

"WILL THE LOVE OF OTHERS SIMILARLY BE PARTED...?"

JIM SHOOTER • EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



"SIR DENIS NAYLAND SMITH'S CASTLE IN SCOTLAND: CALLED STORMHAVEN, IT SERVES AS THE MAIN HEADQUARTERS FOR OUR NEW ORGANIZATION, FREE-LANCE RESTORATIONS..."

SURE YOU WANT THIS THING SET ON THE HIGHEST SPEED, SHANG? YOU HAVEN'T EVEN GOT A RACKET.

THEY ARE ONLY TENNIS BALLS, LEIKO.



OKAY, NASTY NASTASE, BUT DON'T BLAME ME IF YOU GET ONE CRAMMED DOWN YOUR THROAT.



TWO DOZEN BALLS AND YOU DEFLECTED EVERY ONE --NICE REACTIONS!

BUT ONLY YOU, SHANG, COULD FIND SUCH A USE FOR THIS CONTRAPTION.

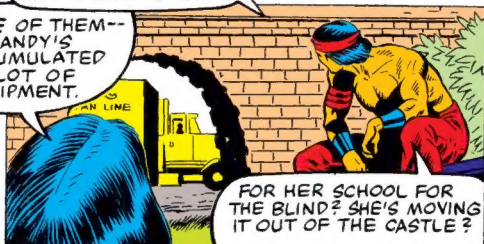
"... AND YET, WHEN BUSINESS IS DONE, IT OFFERS ABUNDANT OPPORTUNITY FOR RECREATION.

"PERHAPS THE TENNIS COURT WILL PROVIDE SOME VARIETY FOR THIS PORTION OF MY REGIMEN..."

"THE WORKOUT HAS GONE ON LONG ENOUGH. BESIDES, MY ARM STILL ACHES..."

EH? A MOVING VAN?

ONE OF THEM--
MANDY'S
ACCUMULATED
A LOT OF
EQUIPMENT.



THAT'S RIGHT--YOU WERE AWAY. SHE'S DECIDED THAT SHARING EVEN A **LARGE** BUILDING WITH US IS TOO HAZARDOUS FOR HER STUDENTS. MOST HAVE ALREADY LEFT, IN FACT.

HER UNCLE IS A MAN OF MEANS, SHANG, AND QUITE PROUD OF WHAT SHE'S BEGUN--HE'S UNDERWRITING THE RELOCATION TO LONDON. MELISSA IS GOING WITH HER TO HELP SET UP.

BUT WHERE--?



COME ON-- MAYBE WE CAN HELP WITH THE OTHER VAN.

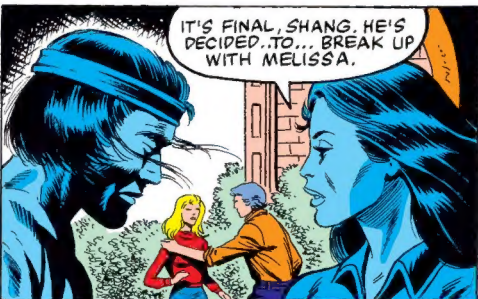


CAREFUL WITH THAT-- IT'S FRAGILE!



WHAT BOMB?

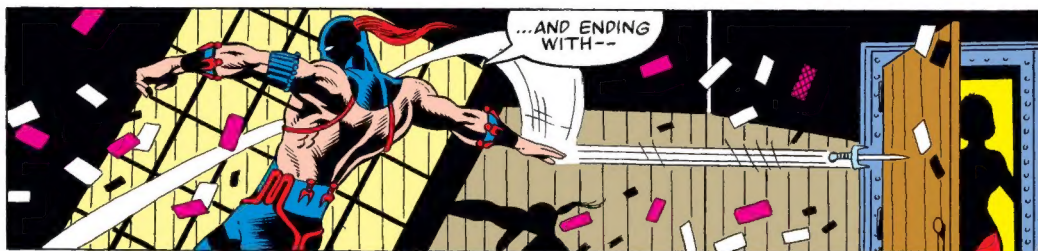
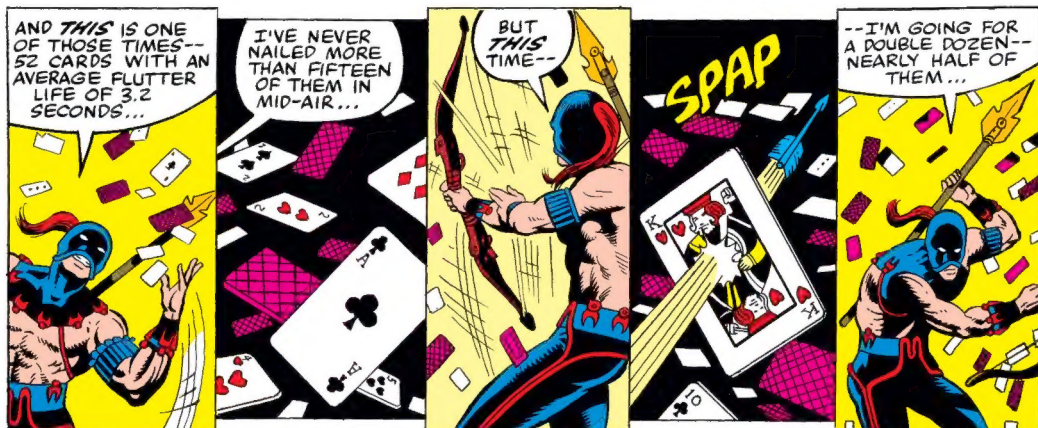
IT'S FINAL, SHANG. HE'S DECIDED...TO... BREAK UP WITH MELISSA.



NOW... NO NEED TO CONVINCE **YOU**, MY FINE STUFFED FRIENDS, THAT MY PROWESS AS A MARKSMAN IS LEGENDARY. INDEED, YOU'VE ALREADY GOTTEN THE POINT...



BUT IF I'M GOING TO TRAIPISE AROUND IN THIS BIZARRE OUTFIT AND CALL MYSELF **ZARAN THE WEAPONS MASTER-- THE SUPREME HUNTER--** THEN I'D BLOODY WELL BETTER CONVINCE **MYSELF** FROM TIME TO TIME...







NO! I CAN'T LET YOU LEAVE!
NOT AFTER I'VE TASTED--

STOP
HIM.



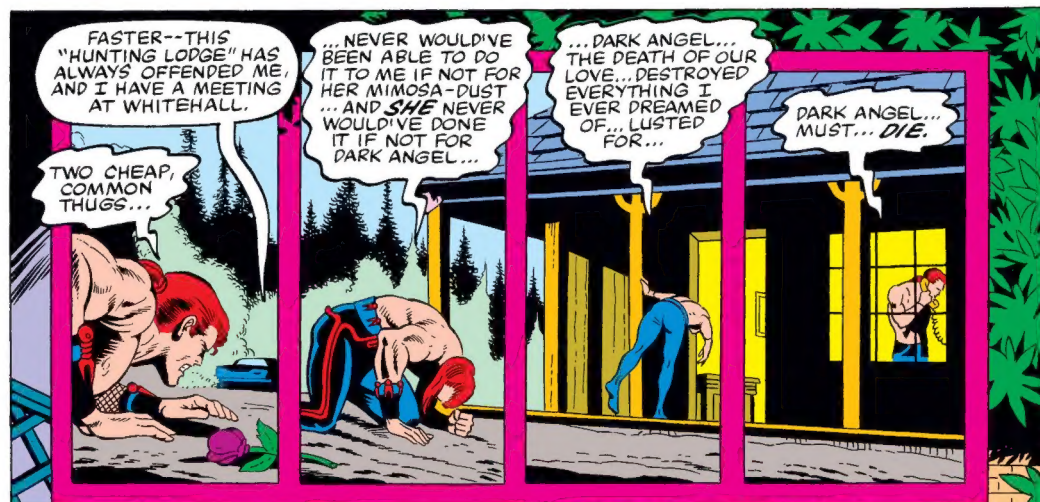
FASTER--THIS
"HUNTING LODGE" HAS
ALWAYS OFFENDED ME,
AND I HAVE A MEETING
AT WHITEHALL.

TWO CHEAP,
COMMON
THUGS...

... NEVER WOULD'VE
BEEN ABLE TO DO
IT TO ME IF NOT FOR
HER MIMOSA-DUST
... AND *SHE* NEVER
WOULD'VE DONE
IT IF NOT FOR
DARK ANGEL...

... DARK ANGEL...
THE DEATH OF OUR
LOVE... DESTROYED
EVERYTHING I
EVER DREAMED
OF... LUSTED
FOR...

DARK ANGEL...
MUST... DIE.



I UNDERSTAND,
CLIVE, TO TELL YOU
THE TRUTH, EVEN
AFTER HELPING
MANDY GET HER
NEW SCHOOL
RUNNING, I WASN'T
SURE I'D COME
BACK ON A
PERMANENT
BASIS.

REALLY, MELISSA? THEN PERHAPS
WE *BOTH* SENGED IT... BOTH KNEW
IT SHOULD END BEFORE IT...
BEFORE IT TURNED *BAD*...



IT WAS BAD ALL ALONG,
AND I KNEW IT--WE WERE
SIMPLY **WRONG** FOR EACH
OTHER CLIVE, BUT I JUST
DIDN'T WANT TO SEE IT
THAT WAY, DIDN'T WANT
TO LET THE TRUTH WIN.

INSTEAD, I TRIED TO
BECOME A PART OF YOUR
WORLD-- I TRULY DID, EVEN
THOUGH MY STUMBLING
EFFORTS MAY'VE MADE IT
HARD TO BELIEVE. I'M
JUST TOO MUCH A
CREATURE OF MY
HOME AND SCHOOL,
CLIVE...

REBELLION
DOESN'T COME EASY
FOR ME-- AND A
GENUINE LOVE OF
DANGER IS EVEN
HARDER... MUCH
HARDER.

I PREFER, GOD HELP
ME, THE SMELL OF BAKED
BREAD TO CORDITE, A WARM
HEARTH TO A RAINY PHONE-
BOX STAKEOUT, THE PICKET-
FENCED COTTAGE, THE
DOG, THE KIDS-- ALL
OF THAT.

THAT'S **MY** WORLD,
CLIVE... AND MAYBE SOME-
DAY, WHEN YOUR LEGS
START TO GO... AND THE
BREATHING COMES HAR-
DER... MAYBE **YOU'LL**
FIND A NEED FOR THOSE
THINGS TOO... AND
MAYBE I'LL STILL
BE AROUND.

I...

BUT DON'T
HOLD YOUR
LOUSY SKIRT-
CHASING
TANTRIC-
LOVING
BREATH!

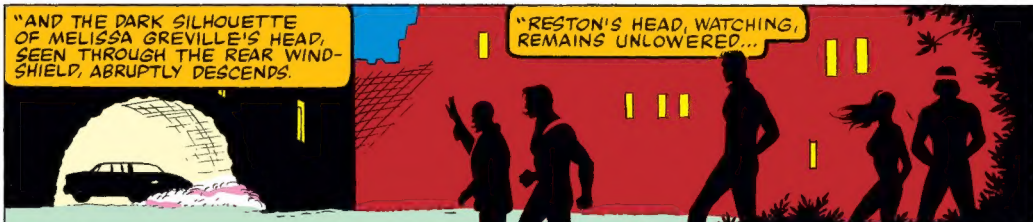
SURE YOU WON'T
RECONSIDER, MELISSA,
AND STAY FOR TOMOR-
ROW'S HUNT?

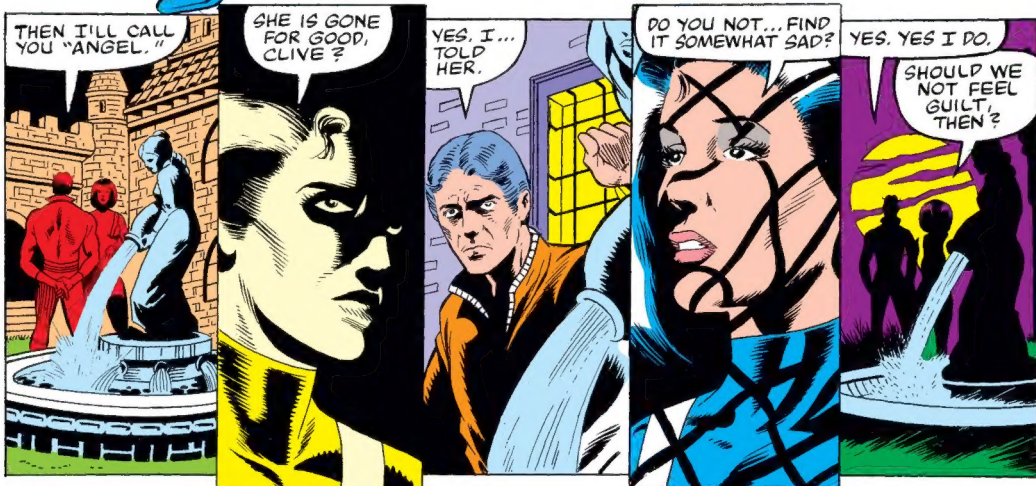
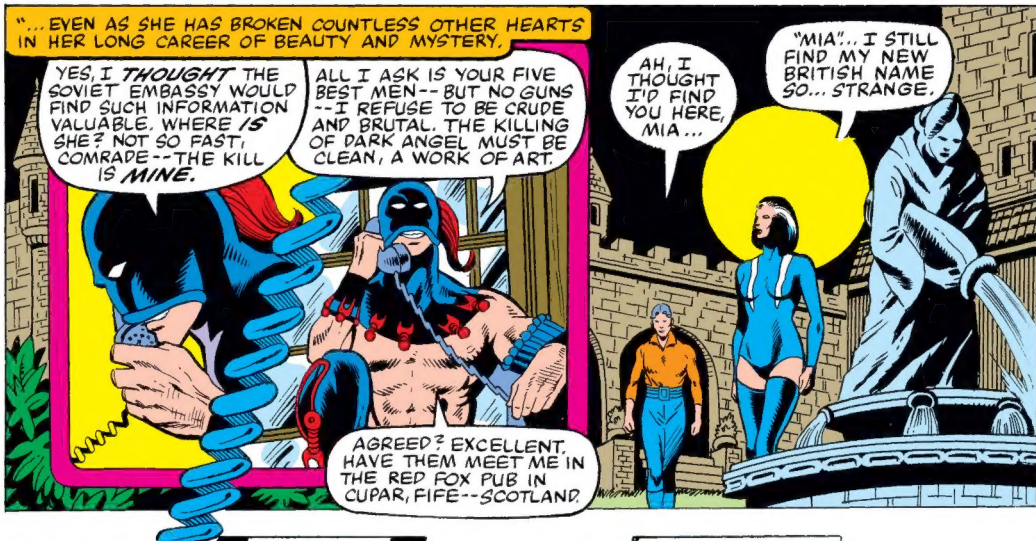
YEAH-- WHAT GOOD IS LEAVING
WITHOUT A FAREWELL FOX?

THANK YOU,
SIR DENIS, BLACK
JACK... BUT I
THINK NOT.

MANDY AND I HAD
BEST BE IN LONDON TO
MEET THE MOVERS.

BESIDES, I
HARDLY FEEL A
... DESIRE... TO
STAY HERE ANY
LONGER.





"MORNING..."

YOU LOOK WEARY, MIA? WERE YOUR MEETINGS AT MI-6 TIRING?

YES, SIR DENIS-- I DID NOT REALIZE I KNEW SO MUCH ABOUT THE KGB. PERHAPS THE EXCITEMENT OF THIS HUNT WILL REJUVENATE ME BEFORE MY NEXT MEETING WITH FAH LO SUEE.

AIN'T THE CHINAMAN, AN' WU COMIN', SIR DENIS?

I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHANG-CHI IS, BLACK JACK...

I DOUBT THIS KIND OF SPORT APPEALS TO HIS FANCY, BUT LEIKO DID GO OFF TO FIND HIM.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING UP THERE, SHANG?

SPEAK SOFTLY, LEIKO. NEW LIFE.

THE MOTHER HAS FINALLY ACCEPTED ME.

ONLY YOU, SHANG... ONLY YOU.

CHEEP

TA RAA
TARAAA

THE TRUMPET'S STARTLED YOUR MOTHER THRUSH, SHANG-- BUT THE HUNT'S STARTING ANYWAY.

YOU KNOW I DON'T HUNT, LEIKO.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE AT LEAST GOING TO RIDE ALONG...

AT A DISTANCE.

THEN LET'S GO-- THEY'VE ALREADY RELEASED THE FOX AND BEGUN THE HUNT!

"THE SURFACE ATTRACTION OF A FOX HUNT IS CLEAR--AS WELL AS INVIGORATING AND EXHILARATING..."

"YET THE CORE OF IT--PURSUING AN ALIEN CREATURE TO ITS DEATH--HOLDS NO APPEAL FOR ME. INDEED, IT INSPIRES ONLY REVULSION... BUT SO TOO DOES THE PROSPECT OF JUDGING THOSE I LOVE."

"AND SO, AS LEIKO RIDES AHEAD, I DO NOT ATTEMPT TO STOP HER... BUT NOR DO I JOIN HER."

"AND WHEN THE SOFT WEIGHT OF PASSIVE EYES IS FELT ALONG THE RIDGE OF MY CHEEK..."

"...I RETURN THE PASSIVE GAZE, SEEKING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A MORE GENTLE ENCOUNTER WITH AN ALIEN CREATURE."

"NO PURSUIT OR FLIGHT HERE. INSTEAD, FACING EACH OTHER, WE STEP FORWARD SLOWLY... JOINING IN TRUST AT A MID-POINT OF COMMON GROUND."

"THE STAG MATCHES MY CAUTIOUS STRIDES WITH THE MAJESTY OF GRACE, SLOWLY CRANING ITS NECK TO SNIFF MY EXTENDED HAND..."



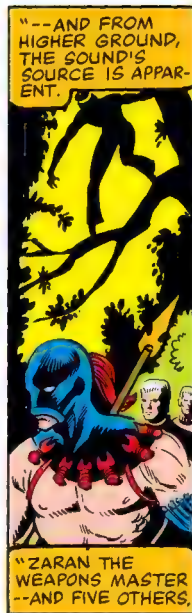
"... WHEN--



"EH--?"



"WE BOLT--



"--AND FROM HIGHER GROUND, THE SOUND'S SOURCE IS APPARENT."



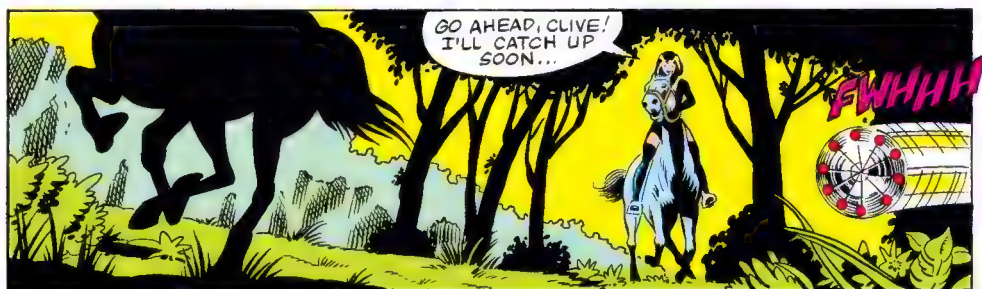
"BUT WHAT CAN MY SISTER'S LOVER WANT HERE? I MUST FOLLOW AND FIND OUT."



THERE-- THE FOX! IT'S CIRCLED BACK TO THE WOODS!

HURRY, ANGEL!

YOU DON'T WANT TO BRING UP THE REAR ALL HUNT LONG, DO YOU?

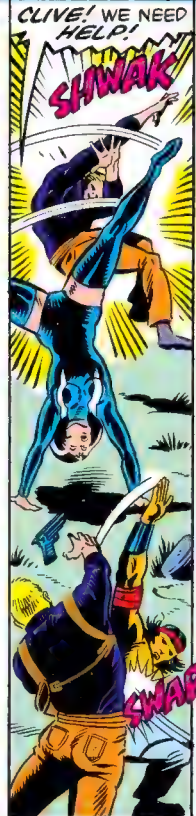
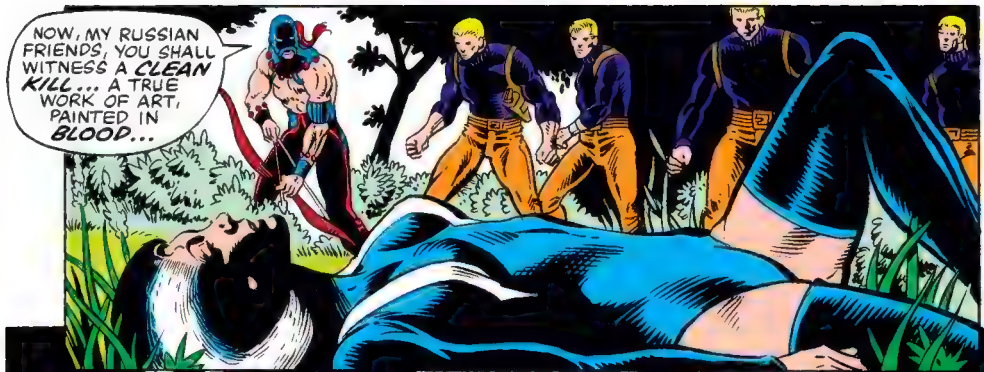


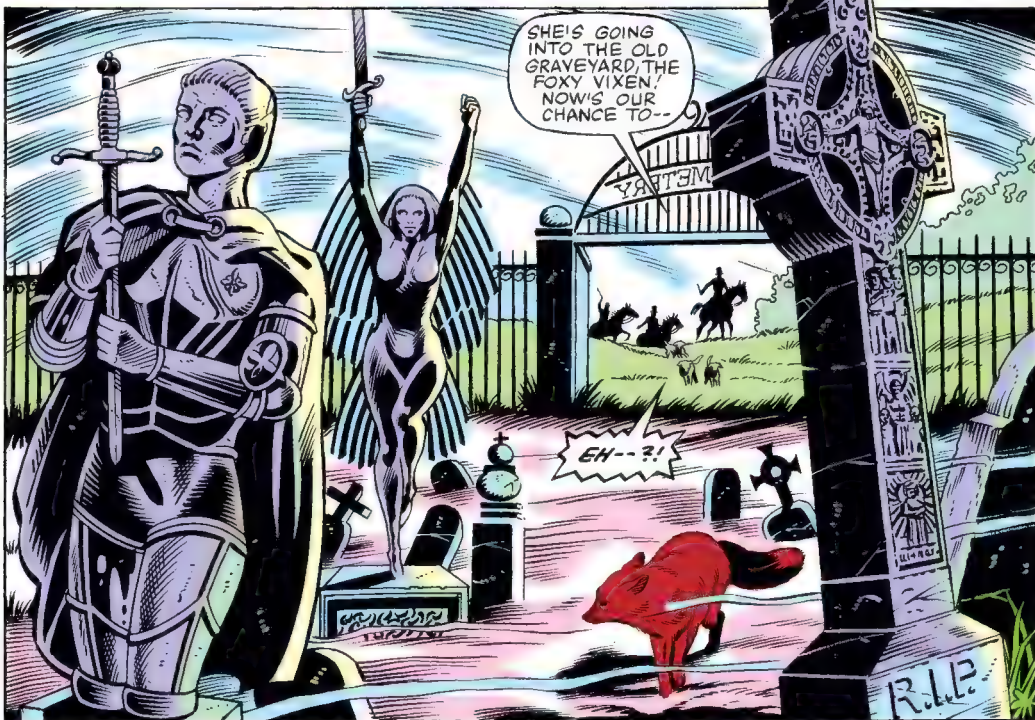
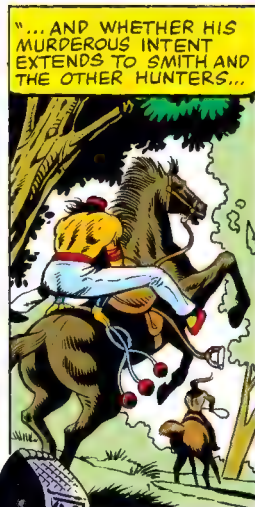
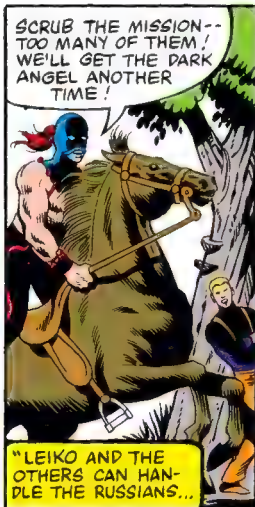
GO AHEAD, CLIVE! I'LL CATCH UP SOON...

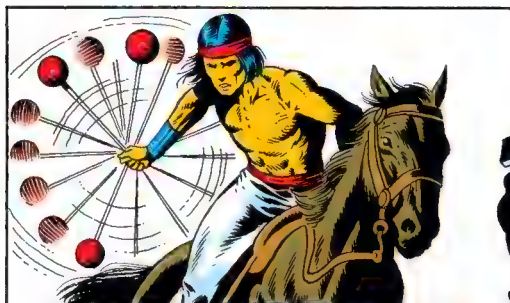
FWHHH!



FWHAPT



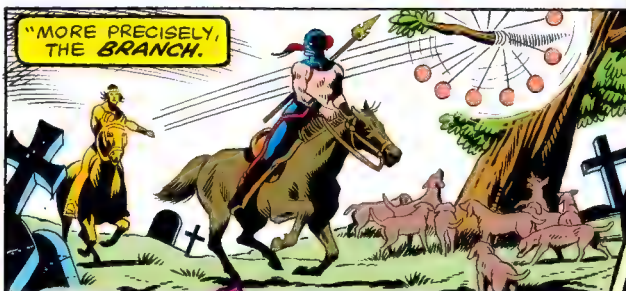




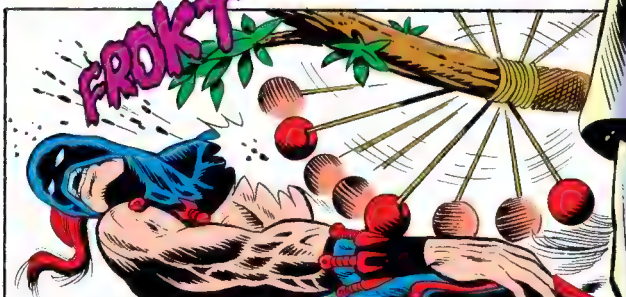
"THE NOISE OF THE HOUNDS
NOW IS SHRILL."

"THEY HAVE TREED
THE FOX IN THE
CENTER OF THE
GRAVEYARD..."

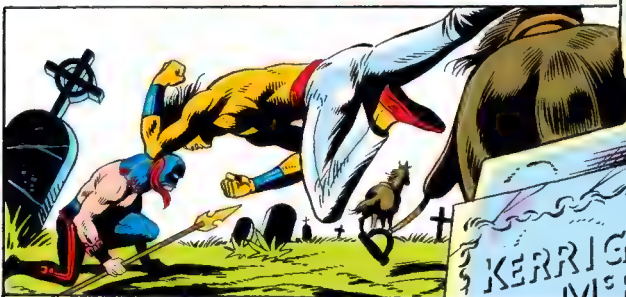
"... AND THE TREE
ITSELF GIVES ME
AN IDEA..."



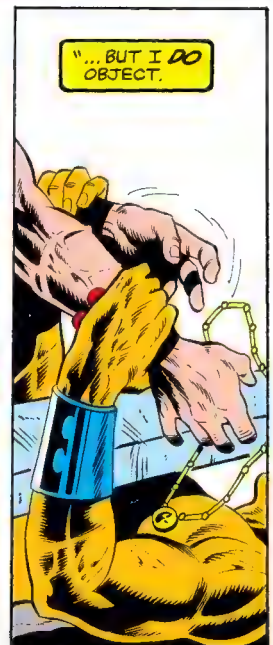
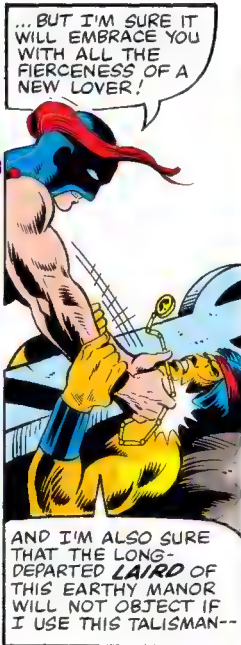
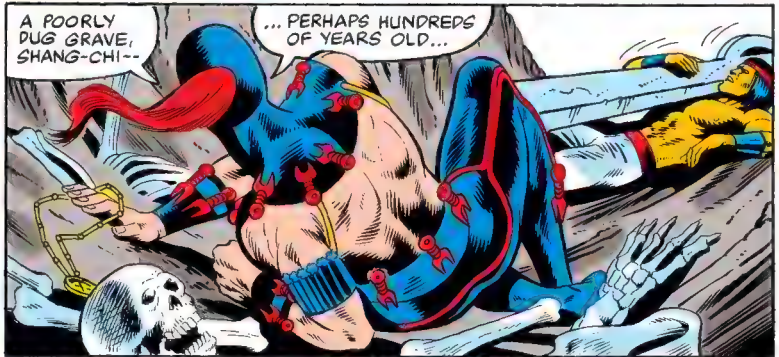
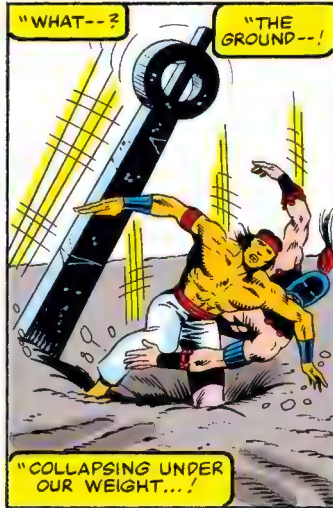
"MORE PRECISELY,
THE BRANCH."

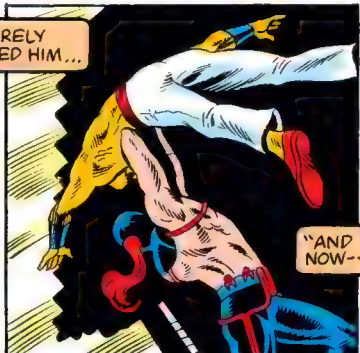
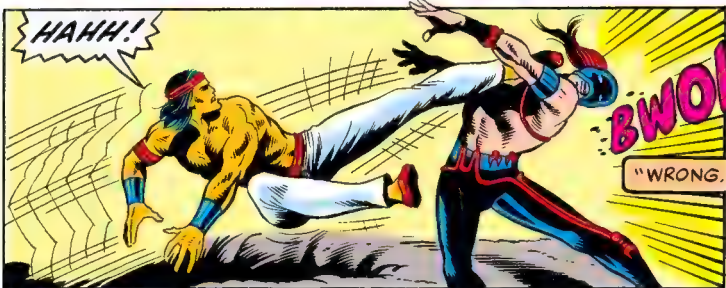
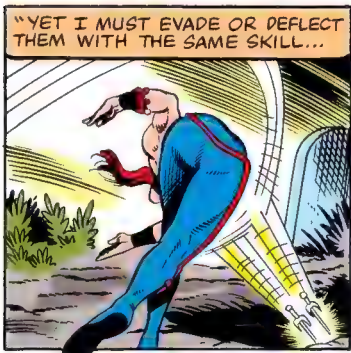
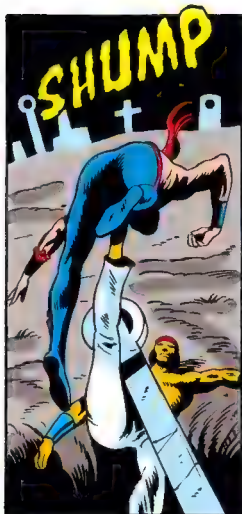


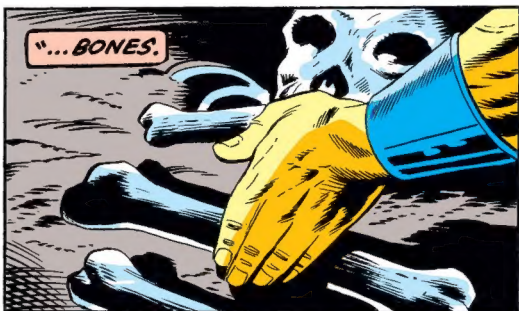
PROK-T



KERRIGAN
McPHERSON







"MY SISTER FAH LO SUEE HAS CHANGED YET ANOTHER HEART, POISONING IT WITH JEALOUSY AND HATE..."

"...AND NOW THE ARTIFACTS OF DEATH DO BATTLE AGAINST AN ARCHITECT OF DEATH."



"BUT THE TWO OF US CLOSEST TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER SEEK NOTHING BUT LIFE..."

"WE TRIUMPH."

"WE SURVIVE."

"WE ATTAIN OUR GOAL."

"AND BECAUSE OF IT..."

"...ANOTHER WILL ALSO LIVE."

"NOW, AS THE HOUNDS CONTINUE BARKING UP THE TREE--"

"--IT BECOMES THE WRONG TREE."

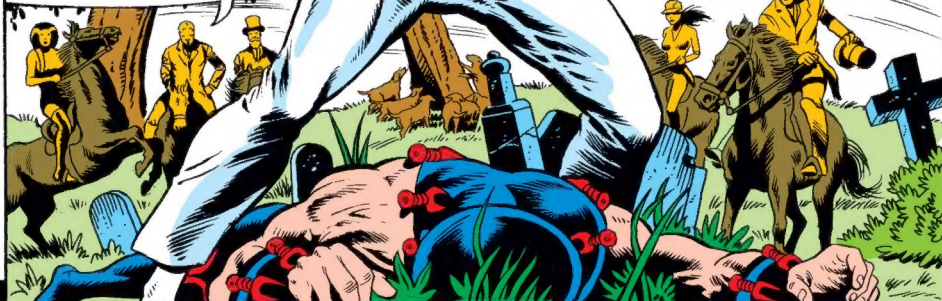
"THE DARK ANGEL OF DEATH WILL LIVE."

"BUT SHE HAS BEEN CHEATED."

"FOR THE HOUNDS--AND FOR ZARAN AS WELL-- IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THEY REALIZE THE HUNT IS OVER... AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FOOLS."

WE FINISHED OFF THE FIVE RUSSIANS, CHI-- AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE DONE THE SAME WITH ZARAN.

IS... IS HE DEAD?



WE CAN ONLY HOPE, WU.

THAT HE IS... OR ISN'T?

YOU HAVE YOUR HOPES... I HAVE MINE.

I STILL REMEMBER THE BEATING HE GAVE ME IN CASABLANCA...

"BUT WILL RESTON, LIKE ZARAN AND THE HOUNDS, FIND HIMSELF A FOOL... NOW THAT HIS HUNT FOR LOVE IS DONE? NOW THAT HE HAS MADE HIS CHOICE?"

WHERE'S THE NEAREST MUSIC MACHINE, SMITH? WHAT WE NEED IS A GOOD STIFF SHOT OF RHYTHM AND BLUES!



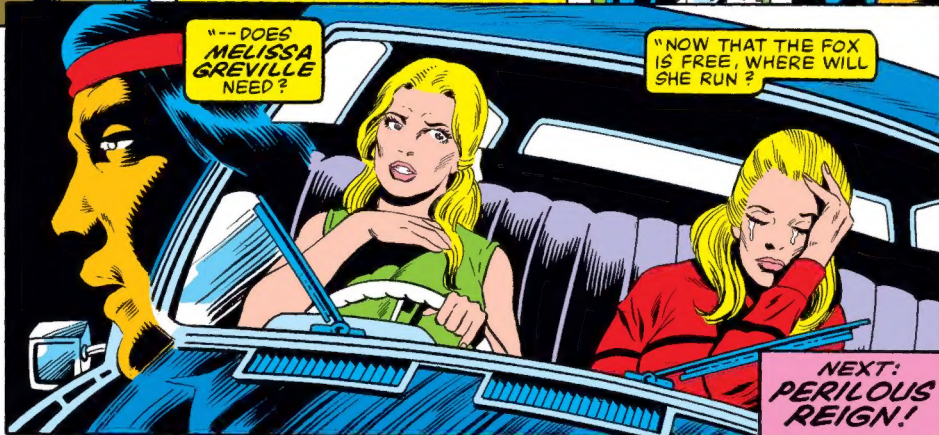
"AS DO I; IT CAUSED ME TO NEARLY KILL ZARAN... BUT EVEN NOW, THE WEAPONS MASTER STILL LIVES."



"AND WHAT, THEN--"

"--DOES MELISSA GREVILLE NEED?"

"NOW THAT THE FOX IS FREE, WHERE WILL SHE RUN?"



NEXT: PERILOUS REIGN!

MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

DENNIS O'NEIL
EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Dear Doug,

Re: MASTER OF KUNG FU #104 (as well as the many past experiences of Shang-Chi and friends)...

Another masterful saga ended. Another tortured, twisted twine of life. Like other masters of communicative art, you have created believable characters, breathed into them the spark of life, and plausibly devised their partially developed fates. And each month I try to decipher its full meaning, to see behind the magic of the creation—to analyze just how it's all done, and without mirrors yet! But it is not meant to be, not fully. Magic is not meant to be dissected...

With each word and whisper, Doug, you come closer to being the ultimate in your craft. For 22 pages each month I become totally engulfed in a world I could never create for myself—yet a world I live and breathe in through you. I read your words, I ponder your meanings, I relish your dreams.

This is what true literature was always meant to be, in the highest and fullest sense. Thanks to you and your co-creators Paul, Mike, and now Gene, I have found something precious. Bless you, and please continue on the book forever. You are truly the master of KUNG FU.

Bob Theissen
515 E. 45th St.
Latonia, KY 41015

Gee, and here we thought we were just doin' comics. But seriously, Bob—thanks much!

Dear Doug and Mike,

When I finished reading MOKF #101—"Not Smoke, Nor Beads, No Blood"—for the first time, I felt somewhat disappointed. Not that it wasn't good—it's just that I could detect nothing truly "classic" about it. But then, thinking that "Doug and Mike would not tell me the story is a classic were it not true," I dug out the prequel—"Smoke, Beads, and Blood" in #76 and reread both stories together, very slowly and deliberately. After finishing I was left breathless and astonished—by the broad scope of your vision, Doug. You and Mike have indeed created a true classic in every sense of the word!

First of all, I loved Mike's cover. I received the distinct impression that someone on that cover would die by story's end, although I wasn't sure who it would be or why. Also, as far as the art goes, I especially liked the moves executed by Shang-Chi on page 21, panels 1-4. When Chi backed into the tree to avoid the Yakuza's blade, and was thereby stunned, only his catlike reflexes and finely honed kung fu skills saved him from possibly fatal injury. Panel 4's side-kick was extremely well placed. Excellent work, Mike!

Although you've already heard it dozens of times, Doug, I'll tell you again—you're simply one of the best writers in the country. And I mean it.

As usual, your title is more than apt for the story; it seems to create or at least evoke a mood and setting all by itself, while also linking it to #76 through a bizarre yin/yang effect. Almost every aspect of #101 is the exact opposite of its counterpart in #76, yet each depends on the other to create a truly unified effect.

Finally, I think it was a bit cruel—but nevertheless poignantly ironic—to have the old man die just as Shang-Chi defeated the last Yakuza. I'm just glad Leiko was there in the room to conceal from Shang the true reason for the old man's death. Knowing the truth, Chi would have been utterly crushed. Or would he...?

Your endings are always masterpieces. The crowning stroke for this issue is no exception. "Yes...so easy...to do...what we must..." (As easy as pulling "...such a thin thread...to such a dead machine.")

Touché, Doug and Mike!

Michael Bourda
602 Centerwood
Houston, TX

Dear Doug, Gene, and Mike,

Please accept this humble letter in the spirit it is written, and accept my thanks for the latest issue of MOKF. I've followed the book for some sixty-odd issues now, and I've been moved and uplifted many times. The art has been consistently flowing and graceful, the stories always infused with spirit and soul as well as action and mood. And yet, until now, I've never sent in a letter of comment.



Each time I read the letters page I see my own feelings precisely registered by others. But this time I'm moved to express myself.

Thank you for MASTER OF KUNG FU. And here's why: I have reveled in Clive Reston and his shadowy father; I've nearly suffered heart attacks guffawing over the antics of Rufus. T. Hackstaber; and, most of all, I have truly marveled at the skill and spirit of Shang-Chi himself. He has acquired wisdom far beyond his years, Doug, and in passing it on to us, he has caused our own spirits to rise and advance. I know mine has, and I will continue to read this book as long as a certain Douglas Moench continues to write it.

When Paul Gulacy left the book, I was afraid that no one could ever compare to what had gone before. His figures flowed with dynamic movement, and the book was a visual masterpiece of brooding backgrounds and intricately conveyed atmosphere. And, wonder of wonders, it still is. Gene and Mike have captured Shang-Chi and company as they *should* be portrayed, and the most recent art is perhaps the best in the book's star-spangled history. I nearly gasped at Gene's incredible splash page, and my enthusiasm carried all the way through to the end.

Finally, I'd like to thank my fellow readers, those who have conveyed my own feelings through their highly articulate thoughts. As long as such a devoted following exists, I know this book will be produced at its highest possible level. If this is our sole contribution, as passive as it is...perhaps it is the most important of all.

Greg T. Garrett
423 N. Maryella
Mustang, OK 73064

Indeed it is, Greg. Without you folks, our stories would have no need to leave the shadows of our skulls. Thanks for letting our imaginations out for walks in the sun. See you in 30 days, People!